



Church Divinity School of the Pacific

The Episcopal Seminary of the West

2451 Ridge Road
Berkeley, California 94709-1217

An Evening with...

Iftekhar Hai

A PROGRAM OF
THE CENTER FOR ANGLICAN LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP

Renewal of Islamic Values

Iftekhar Hai, President of the United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance, will speak out on how Islam that came 1425 years ago has the values of the 21st Century. He talks about its inter-religious connections to all the world's religions, especially to Judeo-Christian values. He will speak about how we all can help bring spiritual reforms to the Islamic world in a democratic way. We are all interdependent economically and ecologically on each other for our survival. We must come up with global values and ethics as new standards of behavior.

Tuesday, February 15, 2005
7:30-9:00 PM

Tucson Common Room
Church Divinity School of the Pacific
2451 Ridge Road Berkeley, CA 94709

Registration is \$15; \$10 per person for parish groups – 3 or more

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Pre-Requisite to Understanding The Quran

It is very important for the reader to know the meaning of certain words in the Quran. If words are not understood in their proper context, then there could be change in the meaning and interpretation of the message of the Quran.

It is also important to know that The Quran was revealed at a time of total disintegration of the Arab society. It is called the age of ignorance. Violence, vendettas, war and disorder was rampant. There were no rules or regulations that governed the Arab society. Verses relating to violence must be looked in the context of healing the society and introducing law and order.

There are also verses of inter-religious peace and harmony and verses relating to human rights that are more applicable in a global and inter-religious context.

Iftekhar A. Hai

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In the Name of God Most Merciful Most Compassionate

VISION OF INTERFAITH

United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance looks at America as one nation, creating one family through interfaith understanding. We promote racial and religious harmony through our religious institutions, projecting an image of America as world leader who stands up for the human rights for all communities.

In this multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society, UMAIA encourages inter-religious dialogue to discover our commonality and differences. Dialogue is an opportunity for growth and change, to ripen and deepen our spirituality. Dialogue can help open our minds and hearts. We encourage compassionate listening. We encourage tolerance and celebrate diversity as one world community upholding the law of the land and creating one human family.

The following is our mission statement.

United Muslims of America interfaith alliance promotes understanding and cooperation among world religions through interfaith dialogue, thereby creating racial and religious harmony and encouraging faith based communities to get involved locally, nationally and globally for the good of all people and help bring healing and spiritual reconstruction.

The following are the officers of UMAIA:

Iftekhhar A. Hai, President and Executive of UMA Interfaith Relations
Shafi Refai, Secretary
Dr. Waheed Siddiquee, Treasurer
Dr. Kaleem Kawaja, Director of UMA Interfaith Alliance
Legal Advisor: Omair Farooqui

We are a non-profit and Tax Exemption organization

In God we Trust

Bio Data of Iftekhhar A. Hai

Iftekhhar A. Hai was born in a village in Southern India during the days of the British rule. He was one of the ten children living in proximity to the “have-not/untouchables” areas of Bombay, India. He went to a Catholic school from ages 6 to 17 years where he learned about Christian values and ethics. He earned his Bachelors from a college, a center of Hindu revivalism (Podar College, Matunga) where he was exposed to resurgent Hindu values (Shiv-Sena) and ethics. Facing religious discrimination he moved to Pakistan for better job opportunities. Pakistan had its own problems because it was divided ethnically and racially. He looked to USA to fulfill his dreams and ended up in San Francisco for his Masters program, living with an elderly, Jewish landlady, a daughter of a Rabbi. She gave him room and food in exchange for eight hours of household chores. The Jewish landlady introduced him to Judaic values and ethics and the strong emotional attachment of Jews to the State of Israel. The commonality of the messages in the Abrahamic faiths coupled with the non-violence concept of Gandhi & Martin Luther King Jr. became of intense importance in resolving religious differences and conflicts.

After earning his MBA in 1973, he agreed to an arranged marriage to Atiya. Twenty five years, as financial officer helped accomplish his American dream. Being a loving husband, father and grandfather did not satisfy him when he found hatred, bigotry and racism towards Muslims in the USA. He changed his profession from finance to interfaith education. He became one of the founding Directors of United Muslims of America in 1982 and became its full time honorary Director of Interfaith Relations since 1990. In June 2004, he founded UMA Interfaith Alliance and became its President. The mission was to promote cooperation and understanding among world religions through interfaith dialogue, creating racial and religious harmony and encouraging American Muslims to get involved locally, nationally and globally for the common good of all people. He is also eager to bring peace between India and Pakistan, and also between Israel and its Arabs neighbors. He works with the following organizations:

- 1) S.F. Interfaith Council (local organization)
- 2) Interfaith Center at the Presidio (local organization)
- 3) Interfaith Witness for Peace in the Middle East (local organization)
- 4) Peninsula Clergy Networks (PCN) (S.F. Bay Area organization)
- 5) Commonwealth Club of CA – Middle-East Forum (state wide organization)
- 6) Interfaith Alliance Foundation, Wash. DC (national organization)
- 7) International Diplomacy Council or Institute of International Education (national organization)
- 8) United Religions Initiative (global organization)
- 9) Parliament of World Religion (global organization)

The 9/11 tragedy has found him explaining Islam and its practices to pastoral students at the Archdiocese Leadership Schools in S.F., Peninsula Academy of Jewish Studies, and Temple Beth El in San Mateo and at Holy Names College in Oakland. Once a substitute volunteer-teacher in Public Schools, Jewish and Christian private schools, he is also an honorary lecturer in universities, churches, charitable and interfaith organizations. He has represented Islam in Conflict Resolution Conferences and interfaith seminars in USA, Canada, UK, India, Pakistan, Africa, Afghanistan, Brazil and Korea. He visited the Vatican to promote peace between Islam & Christianity in March 2006.

He is a writer who not only eliminates negative stereotyping, but also differentiates between moderate and extremist interpretation of Islam. Most of the San Francisco bay area newspapers have printed his articles. From the last two years his columns have been appearing in Faith pages of San Mateo Times. He compares the global and inter-religious message of Islam to other religions and spiritual traditions. He also talks about a list of grievances of the Muslim world because of U.S. foreign policies. Lately he has been one of the most sought after speaker on peace and reconciliation among religions. Earnestly he talks about the challenges facing the American Muslims in the 21st century in the face of terrorism, globalization and interconnectedness. He is a humanist and focuses on humanity, living as one family with its wonderful diversity, on one piece of real estate – THE EARTH.

United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance

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(This page goes in front of every Yusuf Ali Quran that we give)

Disclaimer

It is very difficult to translate The Quran in any other language. Arabic is a very rich language where one word may have more than one meaning. In some cases the same word may have several meaning depending in what cultural background one is referring to.

Translation and interpretation of The Quran is a science. It is a great challenge to bring out the true meaning of its message. There is no perfect translation. Presently there are over one thousand translations of The Quran only in the English language and some of them are bad. We urge the reader to use caution in drawing conclusions when they read any translation.

Incorrect translations and wrong interpretations can cause a lot of misunderstanding. we urge the readers to consult scholars in the Arabic language who also have sound knowledge of English language to arrive at most correct interpretation. A good translation will contain a message of unity, faith and discipline for all humanity.

There are verses in the Quran that are basic and fundamental to humanity and there are verses which are allegorical. Most of the Quran is easy to understand and easy to relate. There are also verses that need further study in relation to time, situation and conditions because the Quran came to Prophet Mohammed (mpbuh) in times of chaos, constant warfare, vendettas and revenge. The Arab society had disintegrated and was bankrupt socially, economically and spiritually. Hence it is very important to understand the reformative and rectifying nature of The Quran.

Key Definitions: How do we define and explain key words is absolutely important to better understanding of The Quran. It creates a mind-set that can become very narrow and selective in creating antagonistic divisions. Some of the key words which are essential to better understanding are the following:

Islam The Quran is very clear in explaining the definition of the word Islam. What does it mean and what does it stand for. The uniqueness of this word is - that it is not named after any person (in this case our Prophet). It means total surrender or submission to Allah (God). Islam was the religion even before our Prophet Mohammed was born (pbuh) as is evidenced in The Quran in reference to 42:13,

"The same religion (Islam or submission) has He established for you that which He enjoined on Noah. That which We have send as inspiration to you (Mohammed pbuh) and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: That you should stay steadfast in religion (submission to our Lord -Islam) and make no divisions therein. (this means work for the unity of humankind) As for those who worship other than God they are on (hard) wrong way to call from. God chooses and guides those whom He wills towards Him.

Commentary: According to this if a Christian, a Jew or any believer in One Supreme Being says "we surrender or submit to God." They are falling within the definition of the word Islam. The art of surrender or submission is called Islam. This art of submission/surrender was shown to all the Prophets and their people as evidenced in The Quran 10:47, 14:4 & 16:36. Islam is very inclusive and broad in its definition. Muslims believe in Allah and take Mohammed (pbuh) as their messenger, just as Christians and Jews believe in the same God and take Jesus and Moses as their respective messengers. However Muslims believe in all the prophets from Jewish and Christian scriptures. One must refrain from judging other believers the depth of surrendering or submission of other believers. God is THE ONLY JUDGE.

Surah 3:85, "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him." Here the definition of Islam must be taken in its greater context of surrendering and submission.

Believer: Anyone who says, "We believe in One God" is a Believer. God be the ultimate judge. No human has the perfect knowledge to judge others.

Muslim: A Muslim is a person who says, "There is no God but One God (Allah) and Mohammed (pbuh) is a messenger of God.

Dhimmi: Non-Muslims who lived in an Islamic state were called dhimmis. This term is very often mis-interpreted. The expressed mission of Islamic state was to establish Islamic rules and regulations and form Islamic society.

Dhimmis were exempted from military service because The Quran honored Christians and Jews as People with Revelations /Book of their own. Their property, life and places of worship were protected. For this service and protection a prorated tax "Jaziya" was collected by the Islamic state. Jaziya was not meant to be oppressive, on the contrary it was a compensation paid to the state for maintenance of law, order and due process in the Islamic state. Non Muslim citizens of Islamic state did not pay the Zakat that was obligatory on every Muslim citizen. The rate of Jaziya was smaller than the Zakat rate. Presently, no Islamic country imposes "Jaziya" on non-Muslims.

Kafir or Infidels:

The word Kafir is derived from the Arabic root word KFR, (Kaf, Fay and Ray) which means to cover, conceal or hide, to hide with the intention of misleading or misinforming. It also includes changing the Holy Scriptures with the intention of suppressing or distorting the truth. In modern language, you can say, it has to be intentional dishonesty, deception and misinformation. Just like a more sophisticated, premeditated perjury is classified as treason. Hence we have to consider the extent of intentional deception or perjury in explaining Kafir.

In case of people meddling with the Holy Scriptures where intentionally truth is either, concealed, changed, omitted, misinterpreted so that people either begin to doubt or lose complete faith in God, His Signs and His Revelations – this can come in the area of infidelity or **Kufr**. Character assassinations of Biblical and Quranic Prophets, done intentionally to undermine the faith or trust/believe in God, His Signs and Revelations can also be classified, as Kufr and people committing such acts are Kafirs or infidels. One cannot call a believer from Christianity and Judaism as Kafir if they do not believe in Mohammed (pbuh) as Messenger.

Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs who comprise 2.5 billion of the world's population cannot all be classified as non-believers or as KAFIRS. There are billions of them who belief in God, the Last Day and Life after Death and in doing righteous deeds. They have also been shown the art of surrender, submission or devotion (which in Arabic is called Islam). The Quran says, "To every people we send an Apostle in their own language and in their own country to clarify (misunderstandings) 14:4, 10:47 &16:36. Muslims are commanded to believe in the revelations that have come to them (The Quran) and the revelations that came before our times (2:4). Hence believers in One God from other faiths cannot be lumped or stereotyped as non-believers. No one has the authority to judge others. Hence they cannot be called KAFIRS because they also have been shown the art of surrender, submission or devotion which is the true meaning of the word Islam. All "kafir" references in the Quran are explained in terms of Pagan Arabs living in a decadent society, never referring to believers from Jewish or Christian faith, whom our Prophet called, "People of the Book" incorporating them in the Medina Constitution.

Jihad: Jihad literally means "struggle" not "Holy War" as is used more often in the western media. Jihad can be at personal level – inner struggle against temptations to act in evil ways, on social level, Jihad means to struggle for decency and goodness, and finally Jihad also means to struggle on the battlefield in defense of freedom, justice and liberty against tyrants when necessary.

American application of the word Jihad in the context of American history is also explained below in form of Questions and Answers:

Questions & Ans on Jihad By Iftekhar A. Hai

Chris Gagne, a Research Associate working at The Henry L. Stimson Center of Washington, DC asked the following questions to Iftekhar Hai, director of interfaith relations for UMAIA. Here are questions and their answers. These were posted on their Web site. The interview was conducted in September 2000.

CG: What does Islam say about war or jihad?

IH : Like the United Nations Charter, Islam permits fighting in self-defense, in defense of human rights, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes. It lays down strict rules of combat that include prohibitions against harming civilians, against destroying forest, crops and livestock. As Muslims see it, injustice would triumph in the world if good people were not prepared to risk their lives in a righteous cause. Example: US saving the Balkans from genocide and US helping defeat Nazi Germany. But the war with Vietnamese people to defeat communism will not be considered just war or Jihad.

Quran states, "Fight in the cause of God (to uphold justice and defeat aggressors) against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits, God does not love transgressors. 2:190

"And fight them (murderers, plunderers, looters and usurpers) until persecution is no more. And if they cease to fight you, then let there be no hostility against the wrong doers." 2:193. In American language this means, "Do not let anyone run over you." Muslims are also commanded to act peacefully if the enemy seeks peace, "If they seek peace, then you also seek peace." 8:61. Do your work with utmost sincerity and put your trust in God.

War (just wars/jihad) is therefore, the last resort, it is subject to rigorous conditions laid down by the sacred law. The often misunderstood and overused term JIHAD literally means, "Struggle." It does not mean holy war. **Jihad, as an Islamic concept has three different levels.** One kind of Jihad is of spiritual nature. An individual's inner struggle, in your own conscience, against evil within, in thoughts, words and deeds. In the American sense, not getting to be a drug user/dealer, indecent sexual pervert or cheater. Another form of Jihad is to struggle for decency and fairness on social level. It is telling the entertainment, cigarette or alcohol industry not to target children/youth for financial gains. Thirdly, Jihad also means to defend oneself when attacked, to uphold the Law and human rights, and when need be stand against injustice, tyranny and oppression.

CG: Under what circumstances is Jihad invalid? When Jihad can be called off?

IH: Jihad becomes invalid when head of the state or person vested with authority calls it off. When he/she sees that injustice, tumult and oppression can cease through negotiation and dialogue. The oppressor sincerely means to solve the problems through peaceful means and not take advantage of the situation. The oppressor also promises to restore human rights for all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, ethnic and racial divisions. Here the assumption is war is going on and people are been driven out of their homes, looted, plundered, robbed and raped. The defenders of human rights promise the oppressed that there will be restitution of their rights to justice through fair trial.

CG: What are the main objectives of declaring Jihad?

IH: The main objective of declaring a Jihad is to say, "injustice, tumult and oppression will not be tolerated." There are people ready to sacrifice their lives so that the people may live in peace, harmony and tranquility. Example: The French Revolution by the people was a Jihad. The American War for Independence from the tyrannical British rule was a Jihad. Indians, both Muslims and Hindus, standing up to the exploitation of Great Britain during the days of OCCUPATION of India was a Jihad. The Jewish people struggle against Nazi Germans in the ghettos was a Jihad. Allied forces waging a war to defeat Nazis is a Jihad.

CG: Under what circumstances can Jihad cease? If the chances of success is poor and death toll among innocents is high, are there Islamic provisions for ending Jihad even though the goal has not been reached? Could Jihad be temporarily suspended so that new non-violent and peaceful ways can be attempted?

IH: Jihad can cease immediately if peaceful means of addressing the problems are implemented and when injustice, tumult and oppression cease. Needless bloodletting is not permissible in Islam. Although Islam allows fighting in self-defense, nevertheless, Prophet Mohammed also preached saying, "Ink of a scholar is holier (better) than blood of a martyr." This means that needless killing based on hatred, bias and bigotry is not permissible at all. Islam encourages dialogues and arguments in the most honorable ways backed with wisdom. Jihad was never meant to coerce ones faith or ideas over any group of people or encourage needless bloodletting. Tyrants, hypocrites and evildoers had also misused jihad in the past.

Added later, on 1/27/2006

The way extremist define "kafir/infidel" is what really gives militaristic or evangelistic meaning to the word Jihad.

Jihad really means struggle in the path of human rights, civil rights, freedom and liberty. The American Civil War was an "American Jihad." for racial equality which is covered in greater meaning of the word human dignity and civil rights. Rosa Parks, the black African American lady who refused to give seat to "white, racist supremacist" is a "jihadist" in the real sense. Because she said "NO" to racial inequality. Martin Luther King who lead a march for civil rights - is a Jihadist in the real sense - because he said no to "oppression" and yes for "racial equality".

The American war of independence from Great Britain was an, "American Jihad" for freedom and liberty. George Washington - was a "Jihadist" in the real sense of the word - he said no to tyrannical policies of occupying power of Great Britain. Patrick Henry, the legislator who said, " give me liberty or give me death" is a real "Jihadist" because he stood for liberty and justice for the American people who were opposing the British colonialists.

The American soldiers who died in 2nd World War are martyrs because they were involved in "Jihad against Fascist Nazis."

And American soldiers who innocently and sincerely belief in liberating Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein are in a real sense "Jihadists" because they are prepared to give last full measure of devotion by sacrificing their own lives so that "Muslims in Iraq" may live a dignified lives.

The Quran supports such liberating movements in 42: from 39 to 42, "Those who resist oppressive wrongs when inflicted on them, and, help defend themselves by fighting back and subdue the tyrants, then forgive and make reconciliation. Their reward is due from God - God does not love those who do wrong.

The blame is only against those who oppress and insolently transgress beyond bounds through their lands, defying righteousness and rule of law. For such people there is a grievous penalty.

But indeed if any show patience and forgives - that will truly be an exercise of courageous will-power and (peaceful) resolution in the conduct of (oppressive) affairs.

Righteousness is closest to Justice (says The Quran)

Every person in his/her conscience knows what is right and what is wrong. Muslims believe in the revelations that came before Islam. The Quran says, "To every people was send an Apostle, in their own language, in their own country - clarifying problems." 14:4 & 10:47. Hence righteousness is not exclusively a Muslim domain. Righteousness is multifaceted with doing good, i.e., giving money in charity, helping the poor, homeless and the downtrodden, doing work honestly, not taking advantage or robbing the weak etc. etc. However, the Quran not only supports all of the above, but also connects it to JUSTICE. The structures of justice are the same all over the world, where the Courts of Law, judges, witnesses, jury, defendants, the accusers and law enforcement personnel play their roles. The character of the people dispensing justice becomes very vital. They should be free from hatred, political and national agendas, religious biases, etc. These are the only people that Quran recommends for dispensing justice through the Courts of Law and they could be from any religion because the honest and truthful people are found in all religious traditions.

Be just for this is closest to righteousness "Oh you who believe! Be consistent in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity, and never let hatred of others lead you to deviate from justice. Be just for this is closest to righteousness, and remain conscious of God, because God is well Aware of all you do." 5:8. *(An ideal judge must have these characteristics - be honest and not have hatred)*

Stand out firmly for Justice "Oh you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even against yourself, against your parents and against your children, against people who are rich or poor, because God is the best of all Protectors. Do not follow your inclinations or your desires, lest you should deviate from justice. Verily God is well acquainted with all that you do." 4:135 This builds on one of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shall not bear false witness."

(Ideal witnesses must have these qualities)

Real Righteousness: "It is not righteousness, that you turn your attention/concentration towards the East or towards the West (supporter of socialism, capitalism, etc.) but it is righteousness, to believe in God, The Last Day, The Angels, The Book (Quran) and the (all) Messengers. It is righteousness, to spend out of your income, for the love of God, for your relatives, for the orphans, for the needy, for the traveler, for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves. To be steadfast in prayers, practice regular charity and to fulfill the contracts that you have made. It is righteousness to be firm and patient in pain, suffering or adversity, and throughout all periods of panic - such are the people of truth, the God conscious (God fearing)." Quran 2:177 *(These are the characteristics of ideal jury).*

The act of righteousness or surrender (which is Islam) is explained in all the religions through, belief in One God, prayers, charity, fasting and going for pilgrimage to their own designated holy places. However, Quran expands the meaning of righteousness to include **Justice** - which leads to reconciliation and forgiveness in all the religions.

In **Christian Bible** in Matthew 5:6 & 10- Righteousness is also mentioned:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied.”

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for **righteousness** sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Jewish Mishnahs – All the wisdom is reduced to one sentence, that is, “To live a **righteous** life.”

Buddhists scriptures talks about the Noble Eight Fold Path: of **right** view, **right** conduct, right livelihood, **right** behavior, **right** thought, **right** effort, **right** speech, **right** concentration.

Native Americans sayings on righteousness: “You must learn to speak **righteousness** so that your words may go as sun’s rays warming the hearts (satisfying) and confirming the eternal truth.”

Hence righteousness from Islamic perspective, in a pluralistic society of today, is to establish justice through the courts of laws, then common problems that are hurting humanity like, poverty and tremendous gap between the rich and the poor nations, drug and alcohol abuse, divorce, teenage violence and crime, ethnic and racial prejudice, hatred, bias, bigotry, wars, anarchy, rampant materialism, sexual debasement of women and children, depletion of natural resources and ecological problems can be tackled by humans as one nation, living on one piece of real estate the Earth.

The Quran backs by saying, “All Mankind was One Nation – but they differed (in selfishness) and created separation (different nation states vying for power.)” 10:19, and the Quran also says, “We have created you into nations and tribes (with diversity) to know (help in bettering each other’s lives not to despise) each other. 49:13.

Errors in the English Translation

Our interpretation of Islam relates to the modern situation, which is inter-religious and intra-religious in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual America. We take wisdom from the Quran to resolve differences and build bridges of understanding. We compare the wisdom in the Quran to the pillars of universally accepted Charter of Human Rights, Bill of Rights and to the US Constitution in a universal concept of one world and humans as one family.

There is no perfect translation. In Yusuf Ali's translation some English words used are too radical – depending upon who has done the translation. Example: When an extremist translates, he uses an adjective, which is extreme, for example, in words like **bad, worst and evil.** An extremist uses the word evil, where as, a scholar professing moderation, selects the word **bad or undesirable.** This choice of words changes the fundamental meaning of the verses in the Quran. The same is the case between **friend, protector and savior.** When the word savior, guardian or protector of your most vital interests, is put in place of “friend” – the message completely changes and it is readily accepted as in 5:51 & other verses where friends are used in the Quran. We recommend the reader to use extra care in the following verses where the word friend and evil is used. **3:28, 5:51, 5:55, 5:81, 5:66, 5:81, 5.93, 5:82**

Evil is very intense in meaning. It is associated with devil. The personification of satanic qualities, bereft of love, compassion, forgiveness and all good and wholesome qualities. One must use it sparingly. It creates lots of animosity and a mind-set that is contrary to peace and tranquility.

Evil is the greatest enemy of humanity. It is mostly associated with people who are fascists, tyrants, hypocrites or oppressors. Be very careful in using the word “evil” for any one.. Pick the right adjective. The verse 5:82 is very often quoted to rationalize demonization of the Jewish people by some Islamic scholars for all times – until eternity. However, some others say that 5:82 is to be interpreted only during times of enmity and war, or in the following cases, times of war, cold war, oppression, violation of human rights, informational warfare through media that has magnifying effects as you see in the 21st century. One must never emphasize the enmity factor for all the people and for all the times. **Words are like missiles with potential of building a world of peace, love and compassion or spreading of bias, bigotry and hatred.** We recommend caution in using phrase like “axis of evil” or “rouge nations” which is **verbal terrorism** creating a public mind-set to wage wars by demonizing the whole population as enemy.

Case of Misinterpretation & Abrogation Theory

Livermore, CA: After delivering a lecture on “Understanding Islam” at The First Presbyterian Church on March 9th 2003 a reference was made to the Quran in a question answer session. Qurans were distributed to the Christian delegation during a visit to the San Ramon Mosque in Northern California. The Christian community had come to the support of the American Muslim community who were subjected to religious and racial slurs in the Contra Costa County after 9/11.

Reading from the Quran an explanation was asked with reference to, “Do not take the Jews and Christian as friends” in 5:51, and Surah Fateha that says, “The way of those on whom you have bestowed your Grace (only the path shown by Mohammed (pbuh) and his followers) not the way of those who earned your wrath (such as the Jews) nor the way of those who went astray (such as the Christians).” The Churchgoer said, “This kind of analysis was also confirmed in the commentary. Any verses rewarding righteous people from other faiths who believed in God, The Last Day and did righteousness (2:62) were abrogated, said the commentary. This is like declaring a theological war with people of other religion? By this analysis how can you say that Islam is a peaceful religion? Please explain this?”

My Answer: Checking the Quran, I found out that, the translation was by Dr. Al-Hilali and Dr. Mohsin Khan. I told the audience that particular translation of Al-Hilali & Dr. Mohsin Khan was wrong. I recommended Yusuf Ali translation with a “disclaimer” attached. “There is not a single translation that is perfect,” I said. I substituted the Quran with Yusuf Ali translation where incorrect commentaries were not there. I also told him that the word “friend” be changed to “savior” in 5:51. The audience contemplated on this and said. “This makes sense when savior is put in place of friend.”

Moral: Never distribute “The Noble Quran” translated by Al-Hilali and Dr. Mohsin Khan, printed in Saudi Arabia. It contains lots of errors and creates a mind-set that is hostile to people of other faiths. The whole translation is based on the, “Theory of Abrogation” or “nasik/mansook” analysis in Arabic. This English translation of the Quran has misled Muslims and people of other faiths all over the world. Incorrect translations and out of context Hadith references has pitted Muslims against the rest of the world. Please see attachment for more details. Never give any Quran without this attachment. It is our duty to rectify the wrong adjectives used that changes the fundamental meaning and creates disservice to Islam.

Abrogation theory in the Quran

NASIK-MANSOOK CASES

The following, Islamic scholars, have set the minds of millions of Muslims all over the world by declaring certain verses in the Quran subjected to the theory of abrogation (nasik & mansook) based on 2:106. Applicability of some verses was incorrectly based on time factor making some verses null and void, whereas, in fact, they should have been based on conditions or situations, as it existed in any part of the world (Mohammed Asad Quran translation). This way any verse of the Quran can be activated depending on the situation in any part of the world. The often-repeated verses that say, “Any who believe in God and do righteousness will be rewarded” were declared abrogated (The Noble Quran by Al Hilali & Mohsin Khan). The definition of a **believer** was limited to those who “believe in Allah and accepted Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) as the last Messenger.” By doing so, they declared a theological war between Muslims and the rest of the world. Only Muslims are believers and people of other faiths are infidel or “**Kafir**” with Hell as their destination. This kind of demonization of other faiths is found all over the Muslim world resulting in a mind-set of arrogance and lack of desire to learn from earlier revelations, when the Quran repeatedly says, “To every people was send an Apostle in their own language and in their own country making things clear.”10:47, 14:4 & 16:36. The universal message of Quran became sectarian and divisive, pitting one Islamic sect against the other and every religion against Islam. This “Theory of Abrogation” has robbed Islam of its logic and reasoning and set our minds back a thousand years.

Our Islamic scholars mistakenly applied abrogation to the verses in the Quran when it should be applied to the earlier revelations, for example 2:106 refers to the Quran abrogating verses in The Bible relating to the doctrine of Trinity and Jesus being the son of God, instituted by King Constantine, a year after ascending the throne when King Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in the year 325 C.E. according to Jewish convert to Islam, Mohammed Asad in interpretation “The Message of the Quran.”

Misinterpretation, the “Abrogation Theory” and selective use of Hadiths has resulted in a theological war with every civilization in the world and has created a confrontational attitude, “us against the rest of the world” kind of religious teaching found all over the world.

Islam’s universal appeal of peace, love, tolerance, compassion and mercy was transformed into a Jihadic message of war and aggression to convert people to Islam by the extremists. They divided the world into two camps, house of war (darul harb) and house of Islam (darul Islam). Religious cooperation to solve global problems facing humanity was never encouraged, resulting in shutting off interfaith dialogues and meetings locally, nationally and globally. Here is an example of prominent Islamic scholars who based their teachings on the “Theory of Abrogation or what is known as Nasik/Mansook Analysis” in Arabic.

Islamic Scholars	Nasik Cases	Declared Mansook (Abrogated)
Abu Bakr Ibn Al-Arabee (d. 1165 c.e.)	297	105
Mustafa Zayd	283	6
Ibn Al Jauzi (d. 1219 c.e)	247	22
Ibn Hazm (d. 1078 c.e.)	214	214
Maki ibn Abu Talib (d. 1059 c.e.)	200	0
Abu Jafar An-Nahaas (d. 960 c.e.)	134	20
Az-Zarqani	22	12
As-Suyoti d. 1533 c.e.)	21	20
Ash-Shanqeti	7	7
Wali Allah-Al Dehlawi (d.1798 c.e.)	5	5

Reference

An Introduction to the Sciences of the Quran by Abu Ammaar Yasir Qadhi, Published by: Al-Hidaayah, P.O.Box 3332, Birmingham, UK B10 9AW, Tel: 0121 753 1889, Fax: 0121 753 2422
email: ahpd@hidaayah.demon.co.uk, Printed by: The Alden Group, Oxford, UK.

Review & Comments on Above 9/13/03

1) I have seen and read the materials before and generally don't use English translations independent of my own adjustment to what is being offered. When we are speaking of research then one of the primary concerns from a scholarly point of view is attempting to identify existing biases on behalf of authors that reflect their choices. This is not unique to Islamic text and sources; rather it is a universal problem in research. My view of the Muslim Ummah in the US is based on an examination of history of immigration, patterns of settlement and ideological adjustments to meet the needs of majority society; thus I am firmly rooted in an Ethnic Studies approach. In doing so we can understand the processes under way in the Muslim community/s i.e. assimilation/integration vs. isolation/enclave approaches, which are normative for immigrant groups in America. Thus, the text becomes an issue relative to the approach and not independent of it. No fundamental disagreement of what is written or offered but the context that brought it forth is worthwhile understanding.

1) Hatem Bazian, Prof. Of Islamic Studies at UC Berkeley, CA

2) "They lie who say that certain Quranic verses are abrogated."
Syed Husain Nasr, Professor of Islam at Georgetown University, Wash. DC.

3) "The source or root causes of the above issues that sets Muslim world apart from the rest of other faiths lies in the interpretation of the Islamic scriptures. There are many other causes. A good interpretation can encourage a spirit of inquiry and a quest of knowledge when done in a global perspective, and on the other hand a selective, non-inclusive and tribal interpretation can close all doors of learning through "Ijtehad" dialogue and discussion."

Akbar Ahmad, Islamic Author, writer and Scholar.

4) "I do not believe in abrogation or Nasik-Mansook theory, although this theory is around for more than a thousand years."

Dr. Maher Hathout at UC Berkeley seminar organized by AMA in Summer of 2002

5) I agree entirely with everything you have said and have said exactly the same thing over and over again myself.

Robert Dickson Crane, (Robert Crane (Islamic name Faruk ul Haq) Principal foreign policy adviser from 1963 to 1968 to President Nixon. On January 20, 1969, Nixon appointed him as Deputy Director of the National Security Council for Planning, and in September, 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed him as U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates)

6) From: Hofmann. Dr. Wilfried <delete for [privacy](#)>

To: "Iftekhhar Hai" <umah82@hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: Need Your opinion on Abrogation in Quran

Date: Fri, 15 Jul 2005 22:10:52 +0200

Dear Brother:

In this I follow Muhammad Asad who considered it absurd that Allah (t.) should have changed His mind within a few years. What is meant when the Qur`an talks about abrogation (2:106) is the replacement of a norm found in a previous holy script (Torah & Gospels) by Qur`anic verses. All throughout, the Qur`an never derogates itself. Typically, when you ask Islamic scholars about abrogated/derogated Qur`anic verses you get the most diverse answers, ranging from several hundred (Ibn-e-Arabee & Ibn -e-Jauzee) to about four verses (Shah Wali Allah). Operating with abrogation/derogation just proves one track minds. Contradictions will disappear if the whole of the Qur`an is taken in full consideration.

Wa-s-salam, Murad Hofmann

7) From: Jeffrey Lang <lang@math.ku.edu>

Author & Professor

To: "Iftekhhar Hai" <umah82@hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: Reforms & Renewal in Islam - Our Research

Date: Mon, 10 Oct 2005 16:22:49 -0500

Dear Iftekhhar,

For a very thorough critique of the Theory of Naskh I recommend John Burton, The Sources of Islamic Law, Islamic theory of abrogation, Edinburgh, 1990.

The following is an excerpt from my second book where I discuss the theory of Naskh and it's connection to the Dar al Harb/Dar al Islam political theory.

As I see it, the theory of abrogation, although widely accepted by Muslim scholars, has several weak points. To begin with, there is no explicit authenticated saying of Muhammed that states this theory or that asserts that some verse has permanently annulled another. All of the hadith (reports of sayings of the Prophet) that speak of abrogation are considered weak by Muslim experts. If a Companion of the Prophet felt that one verse permanently cancelled another, that was his or her personal interpretation. For Muslims, only a statement of Muhammed that a verse had been abrogated should be authoritative and there exist no reliable reports of this nature.

Verses 2:106 and 16:101 of the Quran are often cited in support of the theory of abrogation, but the context indicates that the annulled revelations referred to are those received by prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad; at the very least, this would be a very natural and plausible interpretation.

Another weakness in the theory is that among the Muslim scholars who accept it, there is wide disagreement on exactly which verses are abrogated and to what extent. In almost all cases where abrogation has been upheld by one writer, there are other writers who argue against the alleged abrogation. Muhammad Ali shows that even with the Companions of Muhammed we find that:

In most cases where a report is traceable to one Companion who held a certain verse to have been abrogated, there is another report traceable to another Companion to the effect that the verse was not abrogated.

It is true that when Muhammed and his Companions met new or altered situations, verses were often revealed that addressed the new circumstances, and then the Muslims would make the appropriate modifications or alterations in their behavior. But there is no reason to conclude from this that one passage of the Quran permanently annulled another. Sometimes, a particular revelation would simply elaborate on or extend a previously revealed ordinance, as in the case of the verses that prohibit drinking wine. In such cases, the earlier injunction and the new one complement each other. On other occasions, the Quran would revise prior instructions in light of changed circumstances—as in the case of the revelation of 9:5—but here again, since the different injunctions deal with different situations, there is no reason to surmise a conflict between them.

There is, in fact, no need for the theory of abrogation. It was used to resolve what Muslim scholars felt were certain contradictory Quranic injunctions, but if close attention is paid to the context of the Quran's precepts, one finds that they do not contradict each other. The Quran itself points to the absence of such internal discrepancies as proof of its divine origins (4:82). Cases where some Muslim scholars sensed a contradiction invariably deal with very different situations. Thus when interpreting the Quran's ordinances, the situational context must not be ignored, for then it becomes easy to mistake an exception for a general rule and vice versa, or to perceive a conflict between passages where none exists.

Finally, the theory of abrogation appears to claim that God has placed in the last revelation to mankind superfluous information and He has had to frequently correct Himself in the process of revealing it. This perception is very hard to square with the Quran's depiction of God. Not surprisingly, quite a number of converts to Islam informed me that they were shocked and their faith severely shaken when they first discovered this theory.

Therefore, I feel that there is no real need or justification for the classical theory of abrogation. Yet without this theory, the Quran cannot be used to support waging war other than in self-defense or against oppression. This is proved by the fact that such a massive application of the theory of abrogation is needed to justify the type of military expansion advocated by the dar al Islam/dar al harb formula. Clearly, the Quran's passages that deal with warfare weigh heavily against such unprovoked aggression.

Take care,

Jeff

The **Commonwealth** Club of California

Section on International Relations

Presents

Mr. Iftekhhar A. Hai

Co-Founder

United Muslims of America and Director of Interfaith Relations

Islam & Constitutional Rights

Moderate and Extremist perspectives in the Islamic world are explored from multi-cultural and “inclusive” experience and outlook of a scholar, educator and a humanist.

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As an educator Mr. Hai shares his faith and in so doing challenges misconceptions and negative stereotypes and helps to reduce suspicion and hostility towards Muslims in the U.S. and also globally. He has traveled to Afghanistan and Rio de Janeiro as part of the international interfaith community seeking to establish peace among the faithful. The challenge today is can religions live in peace?

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Islam & Constitutional Rights Commonwealth Club Speech by Iftekhar Hai

Notes from Nov. 20th Speech

San Francisco, CA: After thanking the Club for hosting me. I made the comparison between the basic and fundamental principles of the US Constitution and Islam. Here are some of the notes that I used in my talk to the Commonwealth Club. The subject is very vast and it was impossible to cover everything in 1-1/2 hours. Since all our rights are basically coming from our Constitution I started with the Preamble that says, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Our Constitution guarantees *freedom of religion* and *free speech* for all the people and for all the religions. The Constitution also says, “Congress shall not pass any law respecting the establishment of any religion, nor prohibiting the exercise of any religion.” These few words are the mind set for all of us as Americans.

The Quran, the Muslim Holy Book is the mind-set for 1.2 billion people in the world and around six to seven million American Muslims. The Quran contains verses that are basic and fundamental, they are the foundation of this Book 3:7. Just like our Constitution is guidance for all Americans, the Quran is guidance for all humanity in 2:2, 87:3. Further more this message is simplified and clarified 43:2,44:2 (in line with Torah and Bible) and made easy to understand and remember as in 44:58,54:17,54:21. This is how the comparison went:

1) How do you define *people*?

Ans: People are defined as in the Quran, 49:13 “Oh people we have created you from a single soul, male and female (Adam & Eve) and have made you into nations and tribes so that you may come to know one another, (not to despise each other) and the best among you are those who are most righteous (God conscious, pious or just). People are also defined from our Prophet’s last sermon, “All mankind (people) are from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab and a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab. Also, a black person is not superior to a white person nor a white person is superior to a black person, except by piety and good actions, and the best among you are those who are most (just) righteous.” Hence in this context all humanity is part of one family says the Quran. There should be no distinction on racial and ethnic lines.

2) What do you understand by making a *more perfect* society?

Ans: A society based on justice is a more perfect society. In the Quran, justice is associated with righteousness. Righteousness can have many interpretations. Here I am specifically referring to righteousness as establishment of justice, spiritually, politically and economically. Since the structures of justice are the same all over the world, namely the various Courts of Laws where the judges, prosecutors, witnesses, juries, etc. play their roles, the character of people involved becomes all the more important. People who are swayed by national, geographical, economic, racial and ethnic interests are incapable of dispensing justice in a global society. There are international entities like the United Nations and International Court in The Hague, Netherlands that should be empowered with laws, that are spiritually rooted in order to dispense justice so that might does not become right. In order to have a more perfect global society backed with justice, the Quran gives broad guidelines of an ideal judge, ideal witnesses and an ideal jury. If these ideals are met, then justice can prevail and peace can reign in our diversely populated universe.

An Ideal Judge: “Oh! Believers, be consistent in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity, **and never let hatred of others lead you to deviate from justice.** Be just for this is closest to righteousness.” 5:8. An ideal judge must – be a sincere witness to truth and equity and not have hatred and dislike for anyone.

An Ideal Witness: “ Oh! Believers, **stand out firmly for justice,** as witnesses to God, even against yourself, against your parents and against your children, against people who are rich or poor, because God is the best of all Protectors. Do not follow your inclinations or your desires, lest you should deviate from justice. Verily God is well acquainted with all that you do.” 4:135. An Ideal witness must not be a false witness. He should overlook family ties and national interests when testifying to the truth.

Ideal People for the Jury: “It is not righteousness, that you turn your attention/concentration towards the East or towards the West (supporter of socialism, capitalism, or any other “ism” etc.) But it is righteousness, to believe in God, The Last Day, The Angels, The Book (Quran) and the (all) Messengers. It is righteousness, to spend out of your income, for the love of God, for the relatives, for the orphans, for the needy, for the traveler, for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves. To be steadfast in prayers, practice regular charity and to fulfill the contracts that you have made. It is righteousness to be firm and patient in pain, suffering or adversity, and throughout all periods of panic – such are the people of truth, the God conscious (God fearing).” Quran 2:177. These are some of the characteristics of an ideal jury.

When people administering justice have the ideals described above, then justice is bound to prevail resulting in a peaceful society.

3) Domestic Tranquility and Common Defense

First, loyalty of a Muslim to a nation must be tied first and foremost to the country of his/her citizenship, where he/she is living, this is mandated in the Quran when it says, “respect the authority or people vested with authority.” Secondly, since a Muslim citizen has taken the pledge of allegiance when he/she became a naturalized citizen, they must act as protectors and guardians of the Constitution. It becomes obligatory to protect the country and its citizens against internal and external dangers, thereby helping to maintain domestic tranquility. Here I am referring to one geographical boundary of a nation.

But we also have to be conscious of our role as world citizens connected technologically, economically and socially, and strive for a better society. Assuming we have a mechanism of establishing justice in a pluralistic society of today through the Courts of Laws, then common problems (enemies) that are hurting humanity like, economic disparity on local and global levels, drug and alcohol abuse, diseases, ignorance, lack of family values, teenage violence and crimes, ethnic and racial prejudice, hatred, bias, bigotry, wars, anarchy, rampant materialism, sexual debasement of women and children, depletion of natural resources and ecological problems can be tackled by humans as one nation, living on one piece of real estate, the Earth. The Quran backs this by saying, “All Mankind was One Nation – but they differed (in self-interest) and created separation (different nation states vying for power.)” 10:19, and also, “We have created you into nations and tribes (with diversity) to know (help in bettering each other’s lives not to despise) each other. The best among you are those who are more God conscious, pious or justice oriented. 49:13.

4) How does Islam promote welfare in a mixed society with a Muslim majority?

Ans: Welfare in a pluralistic society can be promoted by first establishing justice through the Courts of Law as mentioned in Answer to Question 2 and then the answer to Question 3 where the common problems (enemies) of humanity are solved in cooperation with all the citizens, coming together in peaceful and non-violent ways.

5) How do you define liberty for Muslims and non-Muslims in mixed society?

Ans: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights come closest to describing the liberty for all the world citizens where, the following rights will be honored for each human being. Examples: freedom of worship, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, equal access to opportunities, right to the pursuit of happiness, no discrimination based on race, religion, creed or ethnicity, etc. (refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Charter for details)

6) Can Islam guarantee freedom of religion for people of all faiths and all citizens?

Ans: Freedom of religion is very clearly supported in 2:256, *“Let there be no compulsion in religion,* and in 109:6, *“To you be your ways and to me mine.”* The Quran goes further in acknowledging the rewards for people of other faiths as is evidenced in 2:62, *“Those who believe (in the Quran), those who follow the Jewish Scriptures, the Christians (who follow the teachings of the Gospels) and the Sabians (followers of John the Baptist or Zoroastrians), any (anyone living in any part of the world) who believe in God, the Last Day and work righteousness, shall have their reward from their Lord, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”* 2:62, 2:112, (repeated numerous times throughout the Quran). The Quran goes much further in acknowledging the diversity of the human race as in 5:48, *“If God would have willed He would have made all humanity into one single community.”* This means diversity is a part of God’s greater plan – because the core message given to all the people is the same, that is submission or surrender to God’s Will which means Islam.

7) Can a Muslim be loyal to “separation of Church and State” in a Western society?

Ans: Let me be more specific in answering this question. Every Muslim born or naturalized in USA has already pledged allegiance to uphold the Law of the Land. If American Muslims do not feel right about it – then I leave that question to their conscience, because the Quran gives them the right to migrate. On the other hand, it is because of the separation of Church and State and freedom of religion, in our Constitution, that Islam has intellectually appealed to millions of Americans. Hence as American Muslims, it is our duty to support the separation of Church and State because you do not want the State to become a sponsor of one religion. Besides, as an American Muslim you have already given allegiance to the US Constitution that stands for the separation of Church and State. We must also not forget that the Western society is not an Islamic State and may never be one. Hence we as Americans must strive jointly to make our society locally, nationally and globally a more fair and just society. This is the American way and also an Islamic way.

8) *Status of women in Islam?*

Ans: Culture and tribal rites should not be mistaken for Islamic rules and regulations. The veil is more common in a traditional society whereas in Islamic countries of South East Asia it is not. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Turkey have elected women as Prime Ministers/President whereas the Arab society is far from giving any significant role to women in the Government. Iran has more women parliamentarians than any other Muslim country. There is a great deal of diversity in the Islamic world, which the Western media never shows. The media only reinforces negative images of Muslim women totally covered in a veil, a perfect media conspiracy because it leads to biased opinions and policy planning. Extremist minded terrorists have a narrow-minded view of Islam. They do not have a global perspective and are more to using force to convey their point of view. This is a very tiny minority- I mean really tiny. The majority of the Islamic world is moderate and progressive and playing a positive role in global affairs.

Conclusion: I am reminded of the famous lines of Abraham Lincoln, “Finally this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that this government, of the people, by the people and for the people shall never perish from this earth.” I see Islam in America upholding the Constitutional Rights of every citizen and dismantling the theory of Samuel Huntington’s War of Civilizations between the West and Islam. Maybe this is the time for a lively debate.

Verses Needing Change in Translation

Surah 2:106. None of our revelations (ayats/verses) do we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but we substitute something better or similar.

Action: Need better commentary/explanation. Revelations (ayats or verses) refer to previous scriptures, The Torah or Gospel. Abrogation applies only to previous “ayats/verses” not to the Quran. Example: Trinity was introduced with the help of King Constantine in 325 A.D.; Jesus was made son of God. All references to Trinity and Jesus as the son of God are subjected to review in the light of abrogation, (see attachment for more on Abrogation)

Surah 5:51 & 5:56, Do not take the Jews and Christians as your friends (auliya). The correct translation of “auliya” is “savior.” Correction is required all over the Quran where friend is used in place of savior (auliya).

American Values Are also Islamic Values

The Christian audience is most impressed when you tell them that God's message in The Torah and The Gospel was instrumental in forming the core principles in the Constitution, Declaration of Independence and in the Bill of Rights. Our Constitution was amended from time to time to reflect the changing climate of human rights and racism. Example: Amendment 13, 14 & 15 was to do away with slavery. Laws were also passed giving the right for women to vote in year 1920.

The global message of The Torah, The Gospels and The Quran is also in the United Nations Charter of Human Rights and in the Constitution of numerous nations.

The following American values are also there in the Quran:

1) Equality of all people based on equality of all Prophets:

The Quran reiterates equality of all prophets, inferring equality of people following various prophets in front of God. Prophets were gifted in different ways; they came to different people, in different times, in different situations and in different countries conveying the core message in different languages.

"We believe in the revelation given to us (The Quran), in the revelation given to Abraham, Ismael, Issac, Jacob and the tribes, and in the revelations given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction (give importance to one over the other) between one and another among them. We bow to God in total submission (Islam)." 2:136, 2:85, 3:84 & 4:152

2) To Establish Liberty and Justice 22:39. Also read "Righteousness" on page 9 & 10

3) Establish Democracy: The universal rule of by the people for the people and of the people is mentioned in 3:159 and 42:38, "Conduct affairs through mutual consultation."

4) Freedom of Religion: In 2:256, "There shall be no compulsion in religion" and in 22:40 we are instructed to support forces that act as check and balance in maintaining religious pluralism, "protecting houses of worships, like churches, monasteries, synagogues and mosques."

5) Struggling, exerting and fighting for Freedom: This kind of efforts in self defense is called JIHAD and is grossly mis-interpreted.

Surah/verses: 2:126, 2:190 to 193, 22:39 & 42:39 to 43 All these verses must be read together to get a complete, fair and balanced interpretation and understanding.

Explanation: In all the above verses, a cross reference must be given to explain them properly. Here fighting is prescribed, as a last resort, when all negotiations fail against tyranny, against robbery or extreme oppression, where people are driven out of their homes and their property and goods are taken by force. The pagan Arabs who were in power at that time were against freedom and liberty and committed atrocities and injustices. They denied basic rights to early Muslims. Most of these verses relate to the cruelty and war that was inflicted. In modern days this can be compared to the American war of independence against the British tyranny on the colonies and its inhabitants, French Revolution and Indian and Pakistani war for independence against the British tyrannical forces.

The Quran is for all times – we must give modern examples when explaining the verses of war that are there in the Quran. We must also mention that most of the atrocities on the early Muslims came from the pagan Arabs.

6) Diversity & Pluralism of human race:

In 5:48: “To you We have given the Scriptures (The Quran) just as we had given the scriptures (Torah & Gospels) to people (Jews & Christians) before you, and we have guided your scriptures in its entirety (Quran is not subjected to abrogation). So judge among people from what knowledge has come to you, and do not be carried over by your vain desires (of self-righteousness). To each among you (referring to all diverse groups) We have prescribed the Law (Torah & Gospels) and an Open Way (conscience). If God would have willed He would have made all humanity into one single community (this re-enforces diversity in God’s creation). God’s plan is to test you in what each one has received (in form of scriptures & conscience). So strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of all the people is to God. God will tell you the truth in matters of which you dispute.” (work for unity of humanity within our beautiful diversity).

7) Unity of Humanity & No Racism:

In 49:13, “We have created you from a single soul, male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may come to know one another.” Also our Prophet said, “All humankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab is not superior to any non-Arab, nor a non-Arab is superior to an Arab, also a white person is not superior to a black person and a black person is not superior to a white person.” Last Sermon

8) Salvation/Rewards for All Good people: 2:62, 5:69, etc. (repeated several times in the Quran).

“Those who believe in The Quran, those who follow the Jewish scriptures, the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in God, the Last Day and does righteousness, shall have their reward from their Lord, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.” And, “Any who believe in God and does righteousness will be rewarded.” Is repeated over 50 times.

END

In God we Trust

